

The Tallest One Was Best

By Azalea Thomson

My rain boots sank into the mud with each step I took, leaving a small pool of water in each impression. My rain jacket swished as I swung my arms. Excitement was in the air. A light sprinkle of rain fell making wet stains on my jeans. This was the Christmas Tree Farm, with its cozy fire pit, log cabin, and barn, and I was here with my dad and sister to get our tree. For the past four years we had been coming to this little farm, with the exception of that one year when it snowed too much to go anywhere. The friendly owners, good selection of trees, and of course the free candy canes, were the main reasons that kept us returning each year.

We marched through the Noble Firs, their stiff, regal branches evenly spaced allowing plenty of room for hanging glittering ornaments. Dazzling in their perfection we passed them by. We weren't looking for a Noble. Next came the Grand Firs with their shiny, dark green needles glistening with water droplets and their evergreen aroma wafting under our noses. Their seducing scent couldn't change our minds: we weren't looking for a Grand either. Finally, we reached the back of the farm where the Douglas Firs had been relegated. Neither noble in appearance nor grand in stature, their fine, soft needles, pine scent and humble simplicity had always made the Douglas Fir our favorite tree.

Under the cloudy and drizzling sky my sister traipsed about saying "What about this one?" to every tree she came across. My dad would walk over, inspect the tree, and then make a suggestion such as "Maybe a little taller..." whereupon my sister would point to a 10 foot tree and ask again. "Well not that tall..." my dad would patiently reply.

I wandered a little farther and came upon a small stand of three trees. I called over my dad and sister and they nodded with approval. But which one? The tallest fir with the not quite as dark green needles, or one of the medium-sized trees with darker needles and fuller shape? After a few minutes of consideration we decided. The tallest one was best.

My dad knelt down and pushed up his sleeves. He asked us one more time, “Are you sure this is the one?” We were. With the confidence of a dad who had done this many times before, he took the saw with its jagged teeth and started sawing steadily. My sister and I stood back, watching as the saw went back and forth, back and forth, slowly counting down the seconds before the Douglas Fir would become our Christmas tree. “TIMBERRRRR!” With a soft swish the tree fell to the ground and we stood for a moment in silence looking with a slight sadness at the space where the tall tree once stood.